

Good morning Mr. Chairman and honorable Supervisors,

My name is Colby Willoughby and I am the Food Safety Manager for Costa Farms, with operations in the Salinas Valley, Huron and Yuma/Imperial regions. My family has been doing business in Monterey County for over 50 years, spanning 3 generations.

I speak to you today as the President of the Salinas Valley Chapter of California Women for Agriculture. Our chapter, with 140 active members represents Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz counties and our members come from many segments of our local community, from marketing specialists, to bankers, food safety specialists, salespersons, trucking and logistics coordinators and homemakers. The Salinas Valley Chapter of CWA is committed to being an ambassador for local agriculture and does so in a number of ways. Our Legislative directors monitor local and statewide proposed legislation and keep up-to-date on agriculture in the news. Our Response and Action team works to communicate about agriculture by sending letters to our legislators and government leaders, as well as sending editorials and letters to the editor of our local and statewide newspapers regarding issues of importance.

We ask you to oppose the [Employee Free Choice Act](#). This Act would strip California workers of their fundamental right to decide whether or not they want union representation. More than 30 years ago Cesar Chavez fought for a worker's right to a secret-ballot election to ensure that intimidation wouldn't influence votes. This Act would directly contradict the original intent for private union elections.

If this Act passes it is highly likely that workers will be influenced to sign documents they are unsure about without proper time to research their options. This Act would replace private ballots with an unprotected process called a "majority sign-up election" that, in reality, is not an election at all.

If this Act is instated, union representatives will provide employees with a card for their signature stating they want the union to be their representative. Upon submitting enough signed cards, the union automatically becomes the employees' collective bargaining representation.

The current provisions of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) are sufficient to guarantee and protect the rights of agricultural employees, employers and unions. Enacted in 1935 with the support of labor organizations and several agricultural employer groups, the NLRA was intended to be and is the nation's most progressive labor law.

The Employee Free Choice Act undermines the right of employees to cast their ballots in a secure, private election, free from coercion, or the fear of coercion and it also deprives them of the chance to hear and consider other viewpoints on unionization.

Thank you for the opportunity to express the opinion of California Women for Agriculture Salinas Valley Chapter and myself to you today.